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Two new birds from Angola

by MELVIN A. TRAYLOR

Received 26th September, 1960

In 1954 Gerd Heinrich collected two males and a female of *Oenanthe monticola* from Mt. Moco and Mt. Soque, Huambo, in the highlands of central Angola, and in 1958 (*Jour. f. Orn.*, 99:357) listed them without subspecific designation. These were the first recorded specimens from inland Angola although the race *albipileata* is found on the arid coast of Benguela. Two other specimens from inland Angola exist, however: a male from Mombolo, Cuanza Sul in the American Museum of Natural History and an immature male from Mt. Moco in the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh. These five specimens differ strikingly from all other races of *monticola* (or from any other *Oenanthe*) in having wholly black tails. They may be described as:

Oenanthe monticola nigricauda subsp. nov.

Type: adult ♂ from Mt. Moco, Huambo, Angola; collected 11th October 1954 by Gerd Heinrich. Collector's No. 15982; Chicago Natural History Museum No. 225374.

Diagnosis: differs from all other races of *monticola* in having a wholly black tail with no trace of white. Males differ also in that some specimens (including the type) have black instead of white lesser and middle wing coverts. Compared to *albipileata* the female is a dark slaty gray rather than brownish; compared to nominate *monticola* the female is paler and has the lower belly white. In size *nigricauda* is smaller than *monticola*, about the size of *albipileata*.

Size of type: wing 101; tail 70; culmen 20; tarsus 30.

Distribution: central Angola, confined to the rocky tops of the highest peaks in Huambo and southern Cuanza Sul.

Remarks: Considering only the color pattern of the type, black tail and black wing coverts, a good case could be made for elevating *nigricauda* to the rank of species. However, the four known males exhibit the same type of polymorphism shown by *monticola* in southern Africa. The two adult males from Mt. Moco have black wing coverts, but the immature male from the same locality and the adult from Mombolo have white ones. Similarly, while three of the males have black crowns, the fourth has a gray one. The extent of white on the under parts also varies, being restricted to the lower belly in the two adults from Mt. Moco, but covering the whole belly in the immature and the Mombolo adult. Longer series might show the other south African variants: white crown, black belly and gray phase.

Mayr and Stresemann (1950, *Evolution* 4: 291-300) have described polymorphism in the genus *Oenanthe*. As they note, one of the chief characters of the genus has been the white or rusty rump and base of tail.

Nigricauda unfortunately forces us to expand the concept of the genus to include exceptional forms with black tails. It is also an exception in being polymorphic with respect to the color of the lesser wing coverts. The most common characters which show polymorphism in *Oenanthe* are the color of the crown, throat and abdomen, and *monticola* of course varies in respect to the whole body plumage. No species is recorded, however, in which the wing coverts vary. The black tail and variable wing coverts would seem to set *nigricauda* off as a very distinct form, but as noted above it shows such close relations with *monticola* that it must be considered at the very least a representative of that form.

Comparative measurements of the different races are:

		wing	culmen
<i>monticola</i> (S.W.A.)	4♂♂	113-117 (114.5)	21.5-22 (21.7)
	3♀♀	101, 107, 107	21, 22
<i>albipileata</i>	4♂♂	100-106 (102.5)	19, 19.5, 20
	3♀♀	98, 105, 105	20, 21, 21
<i>nigricauda</i>	3♂♂	101, 101, 101	20, 20, 21
	1♀	99	—

Over two years ago Mrs. B. P. Hall wrote to ask me if we had any *Alethe castanea* from Angola, since she had a juvenal from Gabela which she believed to be of this species. I replied with an unequivocal "no", neglecting to mention that we did have *poliocephala* from the same locality. Shortly thereafter she wrote that since Heinrich had recorded *poliocephala* from Gabela she felt sure that her juvenal belonged to that species, but she wondered why her specimen had a few olive feathers on the crown. Now that I have belatedly examined our *poliocephala* the answer to her query is obvious—the Gabela population is a well marked subspecies, characterized by a reddish-olive crown, which I take pleasure in naming as consolation for her unrewarded prodding:

Alethe poliocephala hallae subsp. nov.

Type: adult ♂ from 15 km. south of Gabela, Cuanza Sul, Angola; collected 12th August 1954, by Gerd Heinrich. Collector's No. 15401; Chicago Natural History Museum, No. 224892.

Diagnosis: differs from all other races of *poliocephala* by having a reddish-olive instead of gray or olive-gray crown; differs from all other races but *castanonota* of Upper Guinea in having light, chestnut brown ear coverts. In color of the back, *hallae* is like *akeleyae* of Kenya, less rufous than *poliocephala* of Cameroon and Gabon but more so than *carruthersi* of Uganda. In size *hallae* is like *poliocephala*.

Size of type: wing 97; tail 64; bill 19; tarsus 29.

Distribution: known only from the region of Gabela, on the escarpment zone in Cuanza Sul, Angola.

Remarks: Chapin (1953, *Bul. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, 75A: 500) reports that Rudolph Braun has assured him that he collected *Alethe poliocephala* at Quicolungo in northern Cuanza Norte. Without specimens it is impossible to anticipate to which race birds from Quicolungo belong; however, the forests of northern Cuanza Norte are the southern outpost of a number of Lower Guinea forest birds, and the chances are that this population would belong to the nominate race.

Mrs. Hall's juvenal was taken 12 miles southwest of Gabela, 17th September 1957. It is fully grown and a few adult feathers are beginning to appear on the crown and back. It is a tribute to Mrs. Hall's discernment that she was able to recognize the subspecific differences on the three crown feathers available.

Comparative wing measurements are:

<i>hallae</i>	2♂♂	95, 97
<i>poliocephala</i>	4♂♂	92-97 (94.5).
<i>carruthersi</i>	8♂♂	84-95 (87.5)
<i>akeleyae</i>	5♂♂	96-102 (98.0)
<i>kungwensis</i>	1♂	96

I would like to thank the British Museum for the loan of the juvenal from Gabela and the specimen of *kungwensis*.

Is *Muscicapa gabela* an Akalat?

by B. P. HALL

Received 1st October, 1960

A recent exchange with the Chicago Natural History Museum has given the British Museum an example of *Muscicapa gabela* Rand (1957, Fieldiana 39: 41), a species discovered by Heinrich in secondary forest 15km south of Gabela, western Angola. The rich bright brown of the upperparts and the long legs distinguish *gabela* from all African members of *Muscicapa*, as Rand pointed out, and in subsequent correspondence he has said that he is not wholly satisfied that it was correctly ascribed to this genus.

I believe that *gabela* is not a Flycatcher but an Akalat, and the representative in western Angola of *Sheppardia*, a genus found sporadically in both lowland and montane forest throughout tropical Africa, apparently frequenting the same sort of tangled undergrowth as that in which *gabela* was found. Rand tells me that his chief reasons for not discussing *gabela* in relation to *Sheppardia* were its 'weak, slender feet and 'flycatcher' bill'. The British Museum is fortunate in having the rather rare genus *Sheppardia* well represented, including good series of *S. c. cyornithopsis* from the Cameroons, and *S. sharpei usambarae*, and these series show there is considerable variation in both these characters within the genus, and even within populations. While I agree that the legs of *gabela* are thinner (and also darker) than those of *cyornithopsis*, they can be matched in strength and size with individuals of *usambarae*, while the darker colour may be due only to freshness. Similarly in individuals of *cyornithopsis* the bill is as wide at the base, or even a trifle wider, than that of the one *gabela* examined, while all forms of *Sheppardia* have, like *gabela*, strong, forward-growing bristles.

In neither of these characters therefore is *gabela* generically distinct from the Akalats, nor can I find any other structural difference. In size it is smaller than most *Sheppardia*, with relatively shorter wings, but the measurements overlap those of *usambarae*, as the Table shows.

Similarly there are no differences in colour or pattern that seem of more than specific importance, for though on the underparts *gabela* lacks the bright orange-buff on the throat and breast, characteristic of other forms of *Sheppardia*, traces of an orange wash can be found in the under wing-coverts, on the chin, and in some of the olive feathers of the breast-band and flanks, showing that orange pigmentation is present but greatly